



Six Finalists Announced to be the 65th Alice in Dairyland

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EDITOR'S NOTE: To request pictures of the finalists, email ashley.huibregtse@wisconsin.gov.

PLATTEVILLE – Six women are now beginning the longest and most public job interview in Wisconsin agriculture. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has announced the six finalists for the 65th Alice in Dairyland position.

The finalists will spend the next month and a half preparing for the selection process May 17-19 in Grant County. During those three days, Alice in Dairyland finalists will complete an individual interview, writing exercise, media interviews, an impromptu question and answer session, an agribusiness tour talk and a finale speech. To become a finalist, these women submitted an application in January and completed a preliminary interview in February.

The 65th Alice in Dairyland will begin her duties on June 4. Alice in Dairyland is a full-time public relations employee of DATCP and serves a one-year contract term.

“The Alice in Dairyland program has a strong history promoting the diversity of Wisconsin agriculture industry, currently at a \$59 billion economic impact,” said Katie Wirkus, the 64th Alice in Dairyland. “One of these finalists will continue this tradition as Wisconsin's most recognized agricultural spokesperson with an exciting year of travel while educating urban and rural audiences on the importance of Wisconsin agriculture.”

The six finalists for the 65th Alice in Dairyland are:

Ann Marie Ames, Janesville, is a reporter at The Janesville Gazette. In this position, Ames has covered agricultural issues and contributes regularly to live and recorded radio interviews. Ames will graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Rock County in May with an associate degree. She grew up active in Rock County 4-H and showed cattle from her grandparents' farm, Ames-Way Farms. Ames has worked as an agriculture reporter for the Portage Daily Register and as a correspondent for The Capital Times. Ames is an active gardener at the Rock County Community Garden and a classroom volunteer at Roosevelt Elementary School.

Rachel Erickson, Oshkosh, graduated in December 2011 from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls with a degree in agricultural education. She completed her student teaching at Luxemburg-Casco High School. Growing up, Erickson was active in 4-H, FFA and the Midwest Junior Pinzgauer Association. In 2009, she served as the Winnebago County Fairest of the Fair. While in college, Erickson was involved in the Delta Theta Sigma-Little Sisters, Rodeo Club and the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT). Erickson was the 4-H Program Assistant for Pierce County Extension in 2008-2009. She also founded “National Wear Green in Support of Agriculture Day.”

Danielle Hammer, Beaver Dam, will graduate in May from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls with a degree in agricultural business and minor in international studies. Hammer is the fifth generation on her family's corn, soybean and wheat farm. Hammer grew up active in 4-H and was selected as the Dodge County Fairest of the Fair in 2010. Hammer traveled to France for an extended study abroad program and continued to work internationally in France and the Netherlands for almost three years. Hammer has interned with the Wisconsin Farmer's Feed Us Program and the American Lung Association Clean Fuels Program.

Sarah Holm, Elk Mound, is a first-generation farmer who milks cows on her family's farm. A founding member of Generation Organic, an organization that supports future agricultural leaders within CROPP Cooperative, she has educated consumers at farms, retail stores, trade shows and universities across America. Holm also works as a free-lance writer and majors in political science at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Amy Manske, Green Bay, is a student at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay majoring in communication with an emphasis in journalism and public relations. When she graduates in May, Manske will also have a minor in business administration. Manske grew up on her family's dairy farm in New London and was very involved in 4-H and FFA. While in high school, Manske served as a Cow Expert at the Wisconsin State Fair educating fair-goers about the dairy industry. She was the Waupaca County Fairest of the Fair in 2010 and Wisconsin State Fairest of the Fairs first-runner up in 2011.

Rochelle Ripp, Lodi, is an associate marketing executive at Filament Marketing in Madison. She utilizes strategic marketing and innovative communications to promote agricultural products, services and initiatives, such as the recently launched WhyAg campaign to build awareness of careers in agriculture. Raised on her family's dairy and cash crop farm, Ripp graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in 2009 with an agribusiness degree in communications. She chairs Dane County Farm Bureau's Ag Promotions Committee, planning events to educate urban and rural consumers about Wisconsin agriculture. Ripp also volunteers with Cows on the Concourse, the Lodi Agricultural Fair and coaches volleyball.

The public is invited to an Impromptu Question & Answer Session and Taste of Grant County on Friday, May 18. The cost of attending Friday evening is \$10 per ticket.

The public is also welcome at the final selection events on Saturday, May 19. For Saturday evening, there are pricing options. For the Finale Program and dinner, it is \$25 per ticket or \$175 for a table of eight people. To attend only the Finale Program, each ticket is \$5.

Tickets for both evenings are available for purchase through the UW-Platteville Box Office at 608-342-1298 or 877-727-1CFA (toll-free). Additional event details and ticket information will be listed on aliceindairyland.com. You can also connect with DATCP on Twitter at twitter.com/widatcp or Facebook at facebook.com/widatcp.

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